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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 003941

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO, AF/SPG, AF/RSA, AF/E.
LONDON AND PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHERS.

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: DARFUR POLITICAL TALKS: AU PSC DEMANDS SLM/A FOCUS

1. (SBU) Summary: According to African Union (AU) mediator for the Darfur Political Talks Amb. Sam Ibok, the Seventh Round of talks will resume in Abuja on November 28. On November 22, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) urged all parties to ensure that the Seventh Round is the "decisive round" with a comprehensive peace agreement consistent with the North-South Comprehensive Peace Agreement of January 2005. The PSC "strongly" demanded that SLM/A leaders put aside their differences to focus on negotiations to end the conflict. The PSC also decided to work with the UNSC to consider appropriate measures, including sanctions, against any party that undermines the peace process. The AU appears to be redoubling efforts on Abuja in order to create more favorable conditions for a mid-January PSC decision on the future of AMIS, including arrangements for a transition to a UN mission. (Note: The PSC Communique and accompanying report were forwarded to AF/SPG and Embassy Khartoum. End note.)

AU OFFICIALS SEEK ABUJA SAVING GRACE, FEAR SLM/A SPOILER

2. (SBU) With the transition of AMIS to UNMIS on AU and partner minds, AU officials express dismay that the October SLM/A "elections" have deepened divisions within the movement, making a political settlement, and impression of AU success, all the more difficult. Peace and Security Commissioner Amb. Said Djinnit indicates that the AU is putting even more emphasis on achieving a timely political settlement in Darfur. Amb. Ibok told Addis-based partners November 16 that the AU team continues to promote an all-inclusive process as excluding Abulwahid El Nur could prompt him to "misbehave" in order to secure a seat at the table. Ibok noted that the AU seeks to ensure that any agreement reached in Abuja is implementable and said that details on security arrangements "will make or break" a settlement. Ibok also stated his personal view that Mini Minawi may not be ready to negotiate and may still be pursuing a military solution to Darfur.

3. (SBU) AU Special Representative Baba Gana Kingibe observed on November 16 that the long-overdue arrival of Canadian APCs will improve AMIS force posture but that AMIS still lacks the capability to "take on the parties" if they refuse to cooperate. Following the October 10 PSC Communique on Darfur, Kingibe had expressed disappointment that the UNSC did not issue a presidential statement supporting the AU Commission's hard-won achievement of a PSC communique mentioning the possibility of UNSC sanctions on non-cooperative parties.

4. (SBU) Comment: The AU undoubtedly hopes to point to signs of progress in Abuja ahead of the "planning mission" to assess AMIS requirements and its future, which will inform a mid-January PSC decision on the AMIS mandate. AU Darfur Integrated Task Force officials indicate that the PSC should also address the issue of transition from an AU to a UN-led military mission, but AU leaders remain wary on timing. Addis-based partners are seeking a meeting with Peace and Security Commissioner Djinnit the week of November 28 to come to agreement on planning mission dates, composition and objectives. End comment.

PSC COMMUNIQUE

5. (U) BEGIN TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union (AU), at its 43rd meeting, held on 22 November 2005, adopted the following decision on the preparation for the 7th Round of Inter-Sudanese Peace Talks on the conflict in Darfur:

Council,

1. Expresses concern over recent developments on the ground, particularly violations of the Ceasefire Agreement, under any pretext whatsoever, and calls upon all the parties to

exercise maximum restraint and to abide by their commitments;

12. Urges all the Parties to return immediately to Abuja for the 7th Round of the Talks, without any preconditions, and to ensure that the 7th Round is the decisive one, with a comprehensive peace Agreement to end the conflict in Darfur, as was agreed at the end of the 6th Round.

13. Reminds the leaders of the SLM/A of their heavy responsibility not to prolong the suffering of their people in Darfur and, in this respect, strongly demands that they put aside their differences and personal ambitions and focus on the negotiations to end the conflict;

14. Further demands that, as soon as practicable, the leadership crisis in the Movement should be addressed collectively and resolved in a manner that is democratic, transparent and fair;

15. Requests the Commission to ensure that invitations to the 7th Round of the Talks are extended to the two groups in the SLM/A, as may be deemed appropriate;

16. Commends all countries and institutions that have taken initiatives to overcome the divisions within the SLM/A and requests them to pursue their efforts in close cooperation and consultation with the AU;

17. Decides, in close cooperation and consultation with the UN Security Council, to consider future appropriate measures, including sanctions, to be taken against any party that will undermine or constitute an obstacle to the peace process in Darfur, including the Abuja Talks, as well as violations of the N'djamena Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement and the Abuja Protocols;

18. Appeals to all international partners to lend their strong support to the AU position on an all-inclusive peace process that will address the legitimate grievances of the people of Darfur and to continue to support the Peace Talks, as well as the AMIS deployment in Darfur, with financial and material resources;

19. Encourages the Special Envoy and Chief Mediator and his Team, the Chadian co-Mediation, the Facilitators and Observers, to spare no efforts to speedily conclude a Comprehensive Peace Agreement on the conflict in Darfur that is consistent with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of January 2005, the Interim Constitution of the Sudan and the Declaration of Principles (DoP) adopted by the parties in Abuja during the 5th Round of Talks;

110. Decides to remain seized with the developments in the peace process in Abuja and the efforts to stabilize the security situation in Darfur.

END TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE.

16. (U) Minimize considered.
HUDDLESTON